



USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity (Bagh) Bagh Year Two First Quarter summary of progress



USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity (Bagh)

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Acronyms

ACME	Accelerating Commitment for Monitoring and Evaluation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
Bagh	USAID's Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity (USAID's Bagh Activity)
BBG	Bangladesh Border Guard
BCAS	Bangladesh Centre for Advance Studies
BGB	Border Guard Bangladesh
CCF	Chief Conservator of Forest
COP	Chief of Party
CREL	Climate Resilient Ecosystem and Livelihoods
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
ETRT	Emergency Tiger Response Team
EU	European Union
FD	Forest Department
FTRT	Forest Tiger Response Team
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Global Positioning System
HTC	Human Tiger Conflict
ICT	Institutional Capacity and Training
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MoEF	Ministry of Environment & Forests
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PEC	Project Evaluation Committee
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
SAC	Special Award Condition
SCBI	Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
SEALS	Sundarbans Environment and Livelihood Support
SERC	Smithsonian Environment Research Center
SI	Smithsonian Institution
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Research Tool
SOW	Scope of work
SRCWP	South Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TPP	Technical Project Proforma
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRTT	Village Tiger Response Team
WCCU	Wildlife Crime Control Unit
WCS	World Conservation Society
WTS	Wildlife Technical Specialist
ZPO	Zoological Park Organization

1 Introduction

USAID's Bagh Activity contributes to protection of the tigers and conservation of the SRF, with the overall goal of conserving biodiversity of Bangladesh. Bagh is a four year project implemented by the FD of the MoEF, through a consortium of partners led by WildTeam.

This is the first QPR for the first quarter of the second year of implementation of the Bagh. The report highlights some of the key accomplishment during the implementation period January 2015 to 30th April 2015.

2 Bagh year two first quarter summary of progress

2.1 Project management

Finalization of the USAID's Bagh Activity year two AWP and the M&E Plan, release of the Livelihoods Specialist from the FD to join the BCAS team to support Component 5, timely production and submission of Monthly tax reports and quarterly financial and technical reports to USAID are some of the achievements of this quarter. Some of the highlights are summarized below:

- WildTeam worked closely with UNOPS, SI and WildTeam UK to map out and finalize the foundational work (like SAC compliance, process mapping and financial management tools) to the organization that will provide clear, practical guidelines and policies for this growing organization.
- UNOPS' has aggressively started its activities in support of WildTeam and USAID's Bagh Activity. Their objective is to provide support for Bagh SACs under five criterion i.e. financial management, procurement management, human resources management, project management and USAID grants management.
- There were numerous consultative meetings held between UNOPS, SI and WildTeam UK to clearly identify their role and responsibilities to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure effective support.
- SI STTA and WildTeam UK STTA SOW were approved by USAID in the last quarter. UNOPS is finalizing their SOW, and are being encouraged to work with both SI and WildTeam UK to ensure that UNOPS SOW is complementary to the already approved SI and WildTeam UK STTA SOWs.
- The Project management manual was drafted by WildTeam UK STTA. WildTeam UK STTA and UNOPS have developed a joint plan to take that through to completion in the second quarter of 2015, folding in UNOPS work on process mapping and PRINCE2 training provision. UNOPS has already started the PRINCE2 training to relevant WildTeam and Bagh staff. The training is expected to be completed in the second quarter.
- Major progress was made in the TPP process i.e. a PEC meeting convened in the Chairmanship of the relevant Member from the planning commission. The PEC has endorsed the TPP for approval with recommendations. USAID's Bagh Activity/WildTeam has already addressed the recommendations and forwarded to FD for submission for approval. We are expecting TPP approval during the second quarter.
- The leadership team of USAID's Bagh Activity identified the gaps in staffing and agreed to recruit additional staff for effective and efficient project implementation.

A slight restructuring of the team has also been proposed. Once the financial viability of the new positions is assessed it will be placed for approval to the CEO of WildTeam and recruitment process will hopefully be completed early part of the second quarter. The new Bagh organogram will also come into effect in the second quarter.

2.2 Technical activity implementation

USAID provided their quick review and feedback on the AWP that was submitted. USAID has provided its concurrence to start the implementation of the majority of the activities but the final approval is pending incorporation of some of the feedback. This has enabled the timely initiation of the majority of the program activities as per the AWP for year two. USAID's Bagh Activity/WildTeam and its partners appreciate this proactive support from USAID. Component-wise progress during the second quarter is summarized as below:

Component 1 (Expanded knowledge base): The component aims to build and expand knowledge base on the science related to the Sundarbans and the tigers by linking research to management interventions by conducting priority research, and developing knowledge dissemination and skills development tools. In quarter one, component 1 activities have been detailed out and implementation has picked up momentum. Some of the activities that have been initiated and/or accomplished and future plans are as below:

- A digital bibliography of all relevant literature to the Sundarbans ecosystem was prepared in 2014. This bibliography contains 1475 documents which were transferred to an open-source bibliography management tool 'Zotero' to make it searchable by title, key-words, author's name, and category. Our future plan is to transfer this library to an online live platform to disseminate this information to various stakeholders for an easy access and search.
- On January 2015, the Summary reports on the consultative Workshop on developing guidelines for the implementation of Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan (BTAP) 2009-2017 was presented to the CCF for his endorsement and approve the formation of the nine member working group chaired by Dr. Tapan Kumar Dey, Conservator of Forest, Wildlife & nature circle. The working group was approved by the Chief Conservator of Forests Bangladesh Forest Department for further action on consultation and development of final BTAP implementation documents for MoEF endorsement.
- A team of scientists from SERC and SCBI visited Bangladesh from Jan. 26-Feb. 1, 2015 to meet local academics, NGOs, and government organizations who are or have worked in the Sundarbans. They also went to the Sundarbans during this visit for reconnaissance survey for developing research plans for mangrove monitoring and other related research. They gave brief overviews of their research and held productive discussions with more than 50 people from more than 13 different organizations including members of the USAID's Bagh Activity, WildTeam, University of Dhaka, Khulna University, the FD, USAID at the United States Embassy, the FD offices in Khulna (Conservator's office, Sundarbans West and East Forest Division, and Wildlife Division) including projects like EU supported SEALS and World Bank supported SRCWP and the IUCN. The SERC team submitted a report to the USAID's Bagh Activity which was shared with USAID.

- Associate Professor M. A. Aziz, Doctoral student at Kent University, UK, was provided support for his field research on non-invasive genetic sampling to estimate tiger density in some parts of the Sundarbans. He finished field sampling in Eastern part of the Sundarbans including Eastern Sanctuary in February and we are expecting to receive a report.
- A meeting with WCS-Bangladesh was held regarding how to incorporate wildlife monitoring related data and protocols with SMART Patrolling database and model, and collaborative research on monitoring of aquatic mammals in the Sundarbans.

Component 2 (Reduced illegal wildlife trafficking): The component aims to contribute to reduced illegal wildlife trafficking activity by building the national capacity of the GoB and civil society to respond to such activities and by engaging regional and international stakeholders. During this quarter the following activities were completed:

- Upon Bagh request, on 11th February 2015 the CCF authorized a SMART patrolling training for 20 FD staff of ACF, Ranger and Forest Guards level. The FD participants were selected using prescribed criteria. Subsequently, from 23rd February 2015 to 6th March 2015, the SMART Patrolling training was conducted for these 20 FD staff in the West Sanctuary and Satkhira range. The CCF inaugurated the training on 23rd February 2015. The training was provided by USAID's Bagh Activity/WildTeam and international trainers from its partners i.e. Panthera and World Conservation Society (WCS). The three international trainers from Panthera taught SMART Patrolling techniques, process of crime scene investigation, data collection, Boat and people search; and two from WCS provided support on SMART data management and GPS use; and one trainer from USAID's Bagh Activity provided information on local law and policy, geographic understanding and patrolling techniques. After this week long training, the participants were provided with certificates.
- After the training, USAID's Bagh Activity submitted an official request letter to the CCF on 6th April 2015 to start regular SMART patrolling. The letter outlines in detail the roles and responsibilities of FD and USAID's Bagh Activity in terms of patrolling, logistics and data management. Once approved, Bagh will support the regular patrolling implementation.
- As part of its community patrolling intervention, USAID's Bagh Activity continues to mobilize FTRT patrolling in the Satkhira range during this quarter. In January, Bagh organized a three-day-long training on Crowd Management, Community Security and Community Patrolling training for the FTRT members. The training was conducted by Bangladesh Ansar and Village Development Police. In March, another two-day-long training was organized for the FTRT members on Map reading, GPS use and Emergency Evacuation training. The training was conducted by the Bagh Patrolling Specialist and two trainers from BBG.
- Tiger Hotline borne data has been collected, collated and stored for further analysis by the wildlife crime information management team. The crime data has been transferred into the SMART software and regular analysis has been done. Wildlife crime information gathering activity has been conducted in Satkhira and Sarankhola range. Wildlife crime database has been updated and reports on the trips produced.

- USAID's Bagh Activity drafted a report on the scope and level of engagement with law enforcing agencies like Police, BGB, Bangladesh Coast Guard, and Bangladesh Customs. This has been submitted to the USAID for receiving clearance for the future engagement with these law enforcement agencies.
- A general concept note on potential training needs for FD and WCCU was developed. Consultation with FD and WCCU has already been initiated for conducting the training need assessment. This will identify the key training needs to combat wildlife crime as well as trainees, through organized strategy sessions and surveys. The TNA will be conducted in the second quarter and a training matrix will be developed for different levels of FD staff and WCCU.
- USAID's Bagh Activity intends to organize an exposure visit for officials from MoEF and FD, and Bagh field staff to the Chitwan National Park, in southern Nepal. This has been approved by the CCF, GOB staff been nominated and they are waiting government order. The Nepal training participants will learn and understand Nepalese best practices in the area of SMART patrolling, related Government regulatory framework, community engagement and multi-agency coordination. Relevant communication with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of Government of Nepal was initiated to organize the meetings and trip logistics. The trip is expected to be organized in the first week of May 2015.

Component 3 (Minimized human-wildlife conflicts): The component aims to prevent human wildlife conflict, reduce fatalities, and provide relief to victim of such conflict. Some of the completed activities during this quarter and their follow up are highlighted below:

- Bagh's Community Action Team organized monthly VTRT meetings and team leader meetings of 49 VTRTs. Based on the VTRT current status survey outcome, VTRT refresher training and reformation plan was developed considering their current knowledge, performance, motivation, capacity and their social acceptance to the community. The yearly VTRT meeting and refresher trainings will be organized in April 2015, focusing on the spirit of volunteerism, VTRTs' roles and responsibilities, sustainability planning, wildlife act and updated management system.
- On March 2015, the Bagh Training team organized a ToT on "Safety training and Awareness Enhancement Program" in Khulna regional office. Selected members of the Bagh Community Action Team were trained on the tools and techniques of conducting and organizing trainings. Following the ToT, two safety trainings and awareness enhancement programs were also conducted for honey collectors in Satkhira and Khulna ranges. Total of 156 honey collectors attended the trainings. In addition, five day long training program was organized for 321 fishermen of the four ranges of the Sundarbans. The day-long trainings focused on safety measures to take into consideration when working in the forest, the process of sustainable honey collection and fishing, simple related tips on first aid, information on wildlife act and compensation policy. The FD officials, Union Parishad chairman/members, Co-management Committee presidents, VTRT members and Bagh-bondhu were present as guests at safety training programs.
- Five members ETRT of Bagh, mainly three veterinarians from Bagh and two from the FD participated in a training program on wildlife rescue, immobilization and health management at the Zoological Park Organization (ZPO) of Thailand from

March 15, 2015 to March 25, 2015. The training provided the participants with new techniques on how to manage a tiger in situation of conflict. Upon their return the ETRT members are expected to facilitate the wild tiger rescue trainings for front line officers and staffs of the FD in Bangladesh. The team also learned different techniques on wildlife health management and immobilization from experienced trainers, wildlife handler, and researchers at ZPO and different universities of Thailand. In addition, the team received training on wild animal nutrition, rescue center management, captive breeding and different correlation of in-situ and ex-situ conservation of wildlife. The core training program occurred in Khao Kheow Open Zoo, Chonburi, Thailand. Rest of the training took place in Dusit Zoo in Bangkok, Kasetsart University, and Department of National Park of Thailand.

- Regular HTC data was collected and collated in the HTC database. The quarterly HTC reports were produced and shared relevant stakeholders by email, with the intention of transitioning onto our online platform for ease of accessing the data for relevant stakeholders. During this quarter, the draft HTC management guideline was updated based on the feedback from the BTAP Technical Guideline Development Workshops organized in the December 2014. The updated HTC management guideline will be presented to the BTAP working group formed by the FD for their review and finalization in the second quarter.
- USAID's Bagh Activity was able to successfully submit an abstract entitled "Human-tiger conflict in the Sundarbans, Bangladesh: Understanding patterns and processes" to the Biodiversity Conservation Society Summit to be held in 2015 in France during the third quarter. We understand that the abstract has been accepted and preparations are underway to prepare a quality and effective poster presentation.

Component 4 (Enhanced communications, outreach, and gender engagement): The aim of the component is to address human threats to tigers, wildlife, and the environment by focusing on behavioral change through communications, outreach and gender engagement. Some of the activities accomplished during this quarter and follow up are highlighted below:

- As part of the 'Sundarban Mayer Moton' (Motherly Sundarbans) phase two: Commitment Campaign, the project organized eight pilot community conversations/village forums in January 2015 in the four ranges of the Sundarbans. These open dialogues are expected to organize the community so that they can increase and strengthen their public commitment to protecting the tigers and conserving the Sundarbans. In March 2015, ten more i.e. six women and four men community conversations/village forums were arranged in the four ranges. Total 80 men and 135 women participated in these open dialogues. The two hours long open dialogues focused on key themes like campaign message, wildlife act, compensation policy, general information on tigers and the Sundarbans, and local peoples' roles to save the Sundarbans.
- USAID's Bagh Activity Year 1's Brand Ambassador work-shops were organized with the participation of selected Bagh-Bondhu (tiger's friend/ campaign brand ambassador) from different social sectors (professionals, teachers, religious leaders and journalist) to lead the 'Sundarban Mayer Moton' phase two: Commitment Campaign. Bagh is conducting a thorough background and

information check using prescribed criteria before selecting the Bagh-Bondhu. The process is in progress and a total of 26 profiles of selected Bagh-Bondhu have been created. This will continue to the next quarter to complete the identification of all the Bagh-Bondhu from the Brand Ambassador workshops.

- USAID's Bagh Activity developed the campaign outdoor signboard and billboard design templates and got the approval of the design template from USAID. Currently, the photo-shooting and production of the campaign materials are in progress.
- The Sundarbans Day was observed in four ranges and Khulna city on 14th February 2015. USAID's Bagh Activity staff participated in all the events. In Khulna city, Forest Department and the Sundarbans Academy organized the Sundarbans Day program with the support of WildTeam, Rupantar, Concern Worldwide, Relief International, CREL and Khulna Press Club. A discussion session, drawing competition and speech competition on the Sundarbans issues were organized among school children in Khulna city program. In the range level, with the support from the Forest Department, WildTeam organized the programs. Essay competition on the Sundarbans topics was held among the school children and a friendship football match was organized between VTRTs and villagers. Bagh COP was one of the special guests in the event in Khulna.
- After receiving feedback from USAID, Bagh communication strategy has been updated and a final version will be submitted to USAID during the second quarter. The strategy outlines how Bagh will address its five components and contribute to achieving the overall activity goal through outreach, behavioral change campaigns, social engagement and communications. Bagh also developed and updated the Branding & Marking templates which have been included in the strategy for future reference. Furthermore, Bagh has started developing the PPP strategy with support from STTAs and is expected to finalize the document in the second quarter.
- USAID's Bagh Activity participated in World Wildlife Day celebration on 3 March 2015 in Dhaka. A seminar and fair was organized by the FD in Osmani Auditorium. Bagh actively participated in the fair and installed a stall with the Sundarbans theme. Bagh showcased Bagh Promo, USAID Biodiversity film, and other audio-visual and published materials in the stall. Bagh brochures and World Wildlife Day caps were distributed to the visitors. The Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Environment & Forests paid his visit to Bagh stall.
- USAID's Bagh Activity has initiated and regularized the weekly online bulletin titled 'TigerTuesday' which will be produced on every Tuesday with the highlights of the previous week and being circulated to USAID, project team and partners. The bulletin will also be uploaded on WildTeam's website and Facebook page to increase its subscribers. 'TigerTuesday' subscriber database will also be broadened over time and government officials along with other stakeholders will also receive the bulletin on a regular basis. Bagh, through this online bulletin, hopes to disseminate major highlights of the week to the strategic audience. So far six TigerTuesday have been produced.
- As a crosscutting component, the Communications & Partnership Team has provided supports to other components on communication, design, creative and other issues.

Component 5 (Improved livelihoods for conservation): The aim of the component is to promote improved livelihood for conservation.

- After much waiting, the FD provided consent to one of its staff to join BCAS's who has now been seconded to Bagh as the Livelihoods Specialist
- The Livelihood Specialist has aggressively started the process to create a Bagh Livelihood Approach. To this effect, he has initiated desktop study on livelihoods, is gearing up to conduct the field surveys, has started to connect with organizations and projects, such as CREL and SEALS, as well as he has started the review of past and current livelihoods trends in the Sundarbans and its periphery. USAID's Bagh Activity and BCAS jointly conducted interviews for a short-term livelihoods expert to support the Livelihoods Specialist.
- USAID's Bagh Activity and CREL met several times throughout the quarter to discuss livelihoods specifically, to avoid duplication, compliment CREL efforts and learn about their best practices in this field. In year 2 the Livelihood Specialist will also be initiating an eco-tourism review.

2.3 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E team finalized the M&E Plan after several iterations and reviews from USAID and ACME. While awaiting the approval of the MEP, the M&E team has created all of the tools to capture results of the indicators, discussed with ACME on best practices for data quality, consulted with IT companies, CREL and ACME to create a database tool for USAID's Bagh Activity and went out for their first field visit in Chanpai and Khulna Range offices. Main highlights for M&E include:

- Team members participated in GIS training session with USAID at Bagh Office
- Team members participated in individual project learning and sharing session organized by USAID
- Drafted component wise Bagh intervention area map of the Sundarbans with support from Research Team and then finalized the map according to the UDAID guideline
- Drafted M&E tools according to USAID's Bagh Activity M&E indicators

2.4 Cross cutting issues

Institution and Capacity building Team (ICT): During this period, the ICT team has been busy building connections with the Component leads, the M&E team and the Gender Specialist to ensure that all training information and workshop details are captured effectively. There are more than a dozen meetings or events per week in the ranges collectively, so ICT worked with the M&E team to develop the capacity building event attendance data collection tool for all upcoming trainings, workshops and meetings, which will feed into M&E data collection and USAID's TrainNet online tool. In addition, the team reviewed all trainings to be conducted this year through the Annual Work Plan, and created an "intervention matrix" in order to provide support to the teams conducting the trainings so that all information will be captured and that the integrity of the training courses will be upheld by data quality standards. The ICT team travelled to the field to provide a Training of Trainers on training techniques to the field team, as well as provide support in creating the modules for the safety trainings provided to the honey collectors in the Sundarbans.

Gender: During this quarter, the Gender Specialist, after much consultation finalized the write-up of Bagh's Gender Approach, which was disseminated to all component leads. In addition, she has also created the Bagh Gender Working Group, and has announced its first meeting in Quarter 2. After several discussions with USAID regarding gender in natural resource management, the Gender Specialist has prepared questionnaires and surveys that will be conducted in the field the second quarter and Bagh anticipates USAID will be able to accompany her during her trips to the field.

3 Implementation priorities for the second quarter

- The program activities are proceedings as per the Annual work plan. The majority of the Quarter two activities are on target.
- The organogram of the program will be revised and circulated. In the last Senior Leadership Team meeting it was identified that USAID's Bagh Activity still requires additional staff to effectively implement the program, a viability plan is being prepared and once received clearance the Bagh will approach the CEO of WildTeam for its approval. Once approved the Bagh organogram will be updated and circulated to all concerned including USAD.

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